

## A population of *Anthus similis* on the Togo range in eastern Ghana

by I. R. Taylor & M. A. Macdonald

Received 5 October 1978

During a visit to the area of Amedzofe (6° 52' N, 0° 28' E) in eastern Ghana in August 1976 we were told by Mr. G. Vanderstichelen about an unidentified pipit which had been seen regularly in the past on a nearby hilltop (known locally as Mt. Game, 760 m) by himself and Dr. L. G. Grimes. We located the birds and it soon became obvious that it was a bird unknown to either of us. We took a full description of the plumage, calls and behaviour on that occasion and supplemented this with notes made in June 1977 (when an unsuccessful attempt was made to secure a specimen) and June 1978. These, together with our knowledge in the field of all other pipits likely to be found in the area, led us to identify the birds as Long-billed Pipits *Anthus similis*, a species known elsewhere in West Africa only from isolated highland areas of Sierra Leone-Guinea-Liberia, Nigeria, Cameroun, Niger and Chad (Serle & Morel 1977).

Because of the interest attached to the discovery of what appears to be a separate population of this greatly fragmented species we provide here a full field description of the birds together with notes on their behaviour and habitat.

*Description.* A largish pipit, appearing slightly smaller than *A. novaezeelandiae* (not available for direct comparison) perhaps because of its more crouching stance. Crown mantle and rump brown with definite but poorly delineated darker centres to feathers. At a distance streaking above was not apparent and the upperparts appeared uniform earth brown. Forehead darker than nape. Supercilium white to off-white, line through eye black, short narrow malar stripe black. Bill dark, not exceptionally long, slender.

Throat whitish. Breast buff to greyish with distinct narrow streaks on lower throat and breast, the streaked area sharply divided from the plain lower-breast and belly. Lower-breast, belly and under-tail coverts were very variable between individuals, shading from pale buffish-white to deep rufous-buff.

Wings dark with pale margins to median and greater coverts, 'primaries and secondaries.

Tail moderately long, brown with off-white outer feathers more or less tinged with pale buff. The narrow pale fringe visible in flight suggested that the pale colour is confined to the outermost feathers with little or none on the second pair.

Legs moderate length, flesh colour.

*Calls.* A faint 'cheet cheet'; a very short soft metallic 'twink' given before and just after rising, and intermittently in flight; a drawn-out 'tsee' heard only in flight.

*Song.* A repeated 'tue-tseeu' or 'tue chwheeu', the second note being very harsh. Given while stationary on the ground, possibly while hovering. Heard in June 1977 and June 1978.

*Behaviour.* Usually seen on rocks and rocky bluffs, avoiding trees, but flushed frequently from grass, to which it probably walked from the rocks on which it landed. Two birds in August 1976 seen in small cassava farm on the edge of the grassland. Gait rather creeping, suggestive of *A. spinoletta*.

*Numbers.* On Mt. Game and 2 minor peaks below it we found evidence of only 4-5 pairs of pipits, a low population considering the area of apparently suitable habitat.

*Habitat.* The Togo Range is part of a chain of peaks 760-915 m high running from southeast Ghana to northern Benin (formerly Dahomey) where it becomes the Atakora Range. Amedzofe lies at the extreme southern end of this chain.

The summit on which the birds were found was bare of trees (a state which appears to be natural and not man-made) and covered with a variety of coarse tussocky grasses and dwarf herbs. The slopes were scattered with numerous emergent rocks and slabs. On two sides the peak was flanked by sheer rock faces, one a very high cliff, the other a low bluff 6-9 m high. The birds were frequently found on the smaller of the faces. The habitat seems typical of *A. similis* which is 'usually associated with highland grasslands and rocky slopes' (Hall & Moreau 1970). Similar grass-topped summits occur to the northeast of Amedzofe and it seems probable that the bird will be found on any peak in the range which combines open grassland with scattered rocky outcrops.

*Acknowledgements:* We are very grateful to Mr. G. Vanderstichelen for bringing this bird to our notice and for introducing us to Amedzofe.

#### References:

- Hall, B. P. & Moreau, R. E. 1960. *An Atlas of Speciation in African Passerine Birds*. British Museum (Natural History): London.  
 Serle, W. & Morel, G. J. 1977. *A Field Guide to the Birds of West Africa*. Collins: London.

*Addresses:* Dr. I. R. Taylor, Dept. of Zoology, University of Ghana, Legon; Dr. M. A. Macdonald, Dept. of Zoology, University of Cape Coast, Ghana. (Present address of both: Dept. of Forestry and Natural Resources, King's Buildings, Mayfield Road, Edinburgh.)

©

## Notes on the song, territorial behaviour and the display of the Antillean Crested Hummingbird *Orthorhyncus cristatus exilis* of St. Lucia, W.I.

by Karl-L. Schuchmann

Received 14 October 1978

During a research programme on the hummingbirds of St. Lucia, West Indies in December 1977 and August 1978, morphological and ethological data on the Antillean Crested Hummingbird *Orthorhyncus cristatus exilis* were collected in the southwestern part of the island, the Mt. Gimie area (Edmund Forest Reserve, elevation 1300 m). This sexually dimorphic species (Bond 1961) is the most common hummingbird on St. Lucia and is distributed virtually from sea level to montane rain-forest. It is the smallest